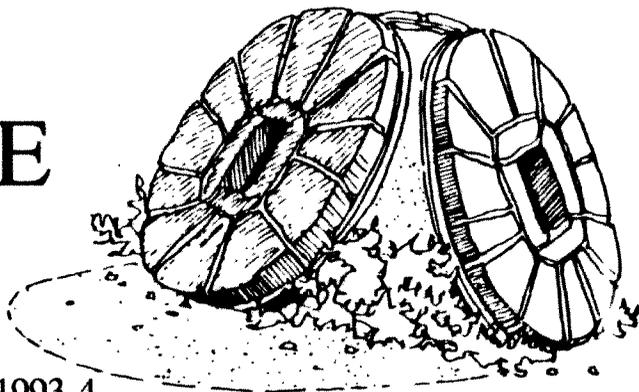


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.108: Winter-Spring 1993-4

Whytock & Reid

We understand that they have sold all of their property in Sunbury, which includes the long shabby warehouse at the back of Belford Mews visible from the other side of the river. The new owners are Gregor Properties Ltd. However, Whytock and Reid will carry on their business from the south western part of the site. A planning application has been submitted for alterations to the large brick building and for an extension to it. An architect member of the DVA has suggested improvements to the design and materials. The Association has supported his comments. Another application is for alterations to the modern showroom and office block, to make "one large executive house". We have commented on details while accepting the change of use.

Mr Manus Gregor has told us that he is planning to replace the warehouse in Belford Mews with a "high class development of mews houses." This will be the subject of another application for planning consent, which may include the demolition of the brick gate-house at the foot of Sunbury Street/Belford Mews.

What about the timber-drying sheds which would be in the garden of the house? These are the subject of a separate application. The smaller would simply be demolished. As for the larger one, which is a listed building, the proposal is to make a very thorough survey, then to have it dismantled and taken to

Summerlee Heritage Park, Coatbridge, where the pieces would be stored until it was reconstructed as part of a saw-mill exhibit there. We would be very sad to lose this fine and unique structure from the place where it belongs, but this proposal may be the best hope for its long-term preservation.

The low shed is of the usual type used for storing timber, stacked horizontally while it dries out. The long one was designed to store long pieces upright, so that a cabinet maker could easily select a piece with just the right grain for the work in hand.

The application for listed-building consent has been framed by Burgess Adams, architects, whose office is in W & R's cabinet works (but not for much longer). Neil Adams told me that Peter Burgess drew up plans for a timber-treatment exhibit at Summerlee several years ago, incorporating a replica of W & R's drying shed. So the idea of transporting the original shed is not just a dodge to get consent for its removal from Mr Gregor's garden. We hope that he does not propose to build mews houses on the site of the sheds. Any such proposal would of course be fiercely opposed.

APOLOGIES

- to any member who did not receive DVN 107 (with an old view over the village on the first page). Copies available on request
- for the misprint of Dorothy Forrester's telephone no. It is 226 5843.

GEORGE SMITH

This stalwart supporter of our Association was ninety on 11th November. His long connection with the Village began when he was sent to the Dean School from his home in William Street. At fifteen he was apprenticed as a cabinetmaker to Whytock & Reid where he remained for fourteen years until he had an accident at work. When he returned after recuperating from its effects he was sacked! The latter part of his working life was spent in the building trade. For a while he worked for the Southern Hospital Group, ("I've been in every mortuary in Edinburgh.") but finished his career as Senior Clerk of Works for the City Architect's Department.

On his marriage he moved to Grindlay Street and later to Colinton where he still lives with his daughter, Dorothy. His wife died some twenty years ago. George's interest in local history was evident in the Colinton Literary Society, of which he is a Past President. After retiring he became very active as a Voluntary Guide to the Royal Mile, wearing his kilt of course, as he does in the Dean Village where he is very popular with visitors on guided walks.

For his birthday the Dean Village Association gave him a copy of Slezer's view of the Village of the Water of Leith about 1690, which was featured in DVN 107.

JIM LEE 1915-1993

Sadly we record the death of Jim Lee, eighth of the nine children of a family that had lived in the Village for at least two generations. He leaves behind his wife Lily, a son and daughter, four grandchildren and two sisters, Mrs Nancy Mackay and Miss Meg Lee. He lived in the Village all his life until his disability obliged him and Lily to move, in 1992, to a ground-floor flat at Whitson Road.

For most of his life he was a mason specialising in granite - tombstones, banks, shop frontages - so skilled that he was never out of a job. During the war he tried to join the merchant navy but worked as a civilian in the naval bases at Nigg and Scapa Flow. Back in Edinburgh he made the shop front for the

Electricity Board in George Street, supervised the installation of Bell's clock outside the Usher Hall and worked on the memorial plaque for George VI in the Thistle Chapel. This led to his presentation to the Queen, who, knowing little about granite, said, "Have a talk with Mum". The Queen Mother then conversed with him about the different granites used for making curling stones. When the business of his main employer, Stuart McGlashan, closed down, he ended his working life as a technician in the Department of Building at Heriot-Watt University.

ACTION PLAN

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has published an **Integrated Environmental Action Plan for the Water of Leith**, by Emma Edwards-Jones (née Grainger) who spoke at our AGM last year.

After some history and a description of the river and its valley, the topic of integrated management is tackled under such headings as water quality (which is mostly Class 1), regulation of flow, fisheries, management of habitats, access, litter, recreation and education. At the end of each section there are aims and prescriptions for attaining these aims, for example, to improve the water quality of the river so that it is continuously well within the parameters of Class 1 throughout its length.

Happily the aims and prescriptions have been accepted by the local-authority departments which own a high percentage of the land in the valley (Water and Drainage, Recreation, Planning, Education, Highways). Private landowners will have to be persuaded to adopt these measures.

The DVA has a copy of this excellent document, containing lots of interesting details. It can be borrowed from the secretary and libraries have copies, but if you wish to acquire one, apply to The River Valleys Officer, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Cramond Glebe Road EH4 6NS. The price is £4.50, including postage. For the maps, which are not essential to the general reader, there may be a small extra charge.

TREES

"The Dirty Weekenders" (student volunteers) have planted young trees on the area of Dean Bank which was cleared for this purpose. Similar planting will be done on the slope below Donaldson's College. It was planned by specialists in the Landscape Section of the Planning Department, who also helped the proprietors of Douglas Crescent Gardens to draw up a management plan for their trees. In a programme to be spread over at least ten years, young trees will replace diseased and over-mature ones, and other treatments will encourage healthy growth of the trees which are retained. Scottish Natural Heritage is contributing to the cost.

All this work is in accordance with the Integrated Environmental Action plan for the Valley of the Water of Leith.

WATER OF LEITH PROJECT GROUP

This group was founded in 1972 by a student of landscape architecture at the University of Edinburgh. He saw that the valley had great potential: for a landscaped walkway, as a reservoir for urban wildlife, as a trout fishery and as a focus for ecological study. The aims of the Project Group were "to stimulate public interest in an appreciation of the historical significance and natural beauty of the Water of Leith, and to promote such improvements to the river and its surroundings as (would) realise its full potential as an amenity for the people of Edinburgh". Recognising that there was a need to involve local people and gain their interest, the Group informed local groups and individuals of their aims and work through clean-ups, conferences etc.

In 1984 they published an excellent book, *The Water of Leith*, edited by Stanley Jamieson, with chapters by specialists on geology, industrial archaeology, civil engineering, flora, fungi, birds, mammals, the fishery etc., and on the histories of the communities along the river. The one on the Dean Village and Stockbridge is by Basil Skinner.

The Water of Leith Project group has now been wound up, in confidence that its cause

will be pursued by the Water of Leith Conservation Trust and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Their final act was to give their residual fund of £1000 to the Wildlife Trust along with their stock of the Water of Leith book. The price is £5.99 plus 90p postage. This can be obtained from Scottish Wildlife Trust at the address given under ACTION PLAN

THE DEAN CENTRE

It will not house the National Gallery of Modern Art, but "the Regional Council is determined to put the Dean Centre to positive use." *The Scotsman 1.12.93*

"The Council's Director of Property Services hopes to bring forward proposals in the New Year... It is hoped that the building will find new life which is fitted to its character and surroundings." *Eric Milligan, Convener*

The Association's lease on garden ground at the Dean Centre gives our vegetable-growing members security until at least the spring of 1995.

ACHIEVED

When we asked for the railings of the playground to be painted, it was done for the first time in fifty years, according to an elderly resident. Railings at Belford Bridge were also painted when we drew attention to their poor condition. After much nagging, stone setts have been replaced at the ford and in Miller Row. A handrail has been installed beside the steps at St Bernard's Bridge. This was first suggested by one of our members, as was the ramp at Lynedoch Place. Have you a suggestion that might be put forward by the Association?

Achieved? An individual member and your Secretary have been trying for a long time to persuade the Highways Department to repair Dean Path. We have appealed to Councillor Ponton who has received this reply from the Director of Highways: The carriageway may be repaired in January if the men are not involved in gritting roads, and footpaths will be repaired as part of their programme of works (i.e. some time). And the long awaited drainage works in Belford Road were to be

started in December, depending on weather conditions.

CLARENCE responds more promptly to minor faults (pot-holes, faulty street lights, etc). Report them yourself on FREEPHONE 0800 232323 between 8am and 5pm.

SENIORLINE

Help the Aged has a Freephone information service, sponsored by British Gas. It is available to senior citizens, their relatives, carers and friends, providing a starting point for people who want to know about such things as welfare and disability benefits, housing, health, support for carers, mobility, sources of local practical help and details of other voluntary organisations. It is of particular benefit to those who are housebound and cannot get to advice and welfare offices. Seniorline is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Just ring Freephone 0800-289 404.

RECYCLING

Glass: Bottle bank behind the Hilton Hotel
Glass, paper, cans: Morrison Street car park;
Broughton School at Fettes Avenue;
Sainsbury's at Craighleith
Furniture: Barnardo's 337 7563; Edinburgh
Furniture Initiative 445 8521; Bethany
Homemaker 343 3993

Electrical goods: Bethany Homemaker can accept these as they have an electrical repair workshop. tel. 343 3993.

CAROL SINGING

After being postponed due to bad weather this open air event was held on a cold, crisp snow-frosted evening. A fine selection of modern and traditional music was played to a happy group who enjoyed a cup of comforting soup. The collection for St Columba's Hospice raised £60.50.

Annie Two Shoes

ORIGINAL HANDCRAFTED
FOOTWEAR AND BAGS

25 North West Circus Place, Stockbridge

CELEBRITIES

On Midsummer Day Billy Connolly was seen in the village and Stuart's shop with the artist John Bellany. They were filming for *The Bigger Picture*, a series on the history of Scottish art for BBC2. In the first instalment Connolly was at St Bernard's Well, walking round Hygeia while discoursing on MacPherson's Ossian. Will there be more scenes by the Water of Leith in later instalments? Watch BBC2 on Mondays at 7.30.

"I had a beautiful walk out along the river to the Gallery of Modern Art this morning. I was born in Florence but cannot think of anything there more impressive than that walk," Sir Richard Rogers, architect, in *The Scotsman* 23.10.93.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, February 8 at 7.30pm

DOUG EDGAR: "Polar Circle, Sunshine and Snow". At Easter 1993 four folk took off to ski from Norway eastwards into Sweden's Sarek Mountains and National Park, a vast white wilderness 100 kilometres north of the Polar Circle, pulling sledges in temperatures down to -25°C.

In the Seminar Room, Millar Row, by kind permission of RMJM.

Tuesday, March 15 at 7.30pm CRIME PREVENTION by a Police Officer of the Community Involvement Section.
In the Seminar Room, Millar Row.

Tuesday, April 26 at 7.30pm Annual General Meeting with an address by BASIL SKINNER "Stage Coach Through the Dean"
At Drumsheugh Toll, 3 Belford Road.

THE DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
Chairman: Barbara Mackay 8 Damside EH43BB (226 2512)

Secretary: Dorothy Forrester 13 Belford Road EH4 3BL (226 5843)

Treasurer: Jeremy Parkin 1B Belford Park EH4 3DP (332 3726)